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ABSTRACT

The first four books of the Economy spelling series, "Spelling Growth," are reviewed in this paper in terms of content and, to a lesser degree, method. The Economy series is teacher-directed and emphasizes discrimination and identification of sounds. These two skills are clearly useful for spelling, but it is claimed that the series makes considerable and unreasonable demands on both teachers and students. There is considerable review in the Economy series, both within and between books. Review of content of previous books is not indicated as such, but is often presented in conjunction with actual new material. The spelling content of these four books in the Economy series is listed, and it is concluded that the series appears to provide a reasonably good basis for learning the sound-to-spelling correspondences of English, despite inadequacies in the teacher's notes and poor linguistic orientation. ("Spelling Growth" is part of "A Phonetic Approach to Spelling," an eight book series by The Economy Company of Oklahoma City.) (TS)

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REVIEW OF THE ECONOMY SPELLING SERIES, *SPELLING GROWTH*

Bruce Cronnell

ABSTRACT

The Economy spelling series, *Spelling Growth*, is reviewed in terms of content and, to a lesser degree, method; strengths and weaknesses are noted. Despite inadequacies in the teacher's notes and poor linguistic orientation, the series appears to provide a reasonably good basis for learning the sound-to-spelling correspondences of English.

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REVIEW OF THE ECONOMY SPELLING SERIES, *SPELLING GROWTH*

In order to better understand spelling as it is presently taught in the schools, several commercial spelling series have been obtained for review (see Cronnell, 1970b, c, d, e). These reviews are more concerned with content than with method, because of this writer's competence and interest in the former.

The series reviewed in this paper is:

> Mason, C.C., Hudson, J.S., Andress, Barbara., & Miller, Jayne. *A phonetic approach to spelling.* Oklahoma City: The Economy Company, 1967.

Andress and Miller are involved in Book 1 only; the remaining books are written by Mason and Hudson alone. There are eight books in the series, for grades 1-8. Only Books 1-4 will be reviewed here, since they best approximate the concerns of the SWRL K-3 Communication Skills Program.

The teacher

The Economy series is teacher-directed; even in Book 4, when spelling generalizations are given in the pupil's book, the emphasis is on the teacher instructing the class. There are extensive teacher's notes, nearly equaling the number of lesson pages in the pupil's edition. The teacher is told everything to do and how to explain everything to the students. The following is a typical paragraph in the teacher's editions (4: T42-43[1]), with only the first few words of each sentence to indicate the extensive instructions:

> Tell the pupils....
> Pronounce bottle.
> Help pupils determine that....
> Ask....
> Ask... and write....
> Ask....
> Ask... and write....
> Ask... and write....
> Pronounce... and ask....
> Remind....
> Let them look....
> Write....
> Ask....
> Present all spelling words... in a similar way.

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[1]The number before the colon is the book number; the number following is the page number; "T" indicates the teacher's edition.

While the teacher is given detailed instructions on how to teach, she is given little information of a linguistic nature about what is to be taught.

Linguistic orientation

Discrimination and identification of sounds are emphasized in the Economy series. These are clearly useful skills for spelling; however, considerable and unreasonable demands are placed on both teachers and students.

When each sound or sound combination is presented or reviewed for spelling, pupils are asked to identify words containing the sound; e.g., "underline the pictured objects whose names end with the t sound" (1: T21). They are also asked to tell what sounds they hear in specific positions. If the teacher stimulus (e.g., "the t sound," above) or the pupil response is to be a consonant sound, a difficult task is presented because of the problems involved in pronouncing consonants in isolation (cf, Russell & Pfaff, 1969a, b). This task is greatly complicated when consonant clusters are involved; e.g. "ask the children to name the final sound [sic;/ks/is the answer] n makes..."; "ask which word contains the sound [sic] of ks" (1: T93).

However, it is not clear how teachers and pupils are actually supposed to pronounce these sounds, as the teacher's edition gives no instructions in this matter. While the Economy series generally does not confuse reading and spelling, it is conceivable that by "sounds" nothing more than letter names is meant. And in lieu of any explanation, it would certainly not be surprising if teachers interpreted "sounds" in this way. The printing of the teacher's notes does not distinguish between spelling and sound; e.g., "the sound of t is spelled with the letter t" (1: T21). Although the series is far from clear on this point, possible confusion of sounds and letters seems very real.

If sounds and letters are not confused, then it is asking a great deal to expect the pronunciation of individual sounds. However, the series in general demands unnatural pronunciation, or at least pronunciations not natural to many dialects. Certain required pronunciations are not those found in normal speech; e.g., "make sure they hear three syllables in every" (2: T85).

In addition to unnatural pronunciation, pronunciation (and hearing) is presented according to some unspecified dialect. The authors Mason and Hudson are in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, public schools, but the dialect does not seem to be regional. Instead it appears to be based on Merriam-Webster dictionaries. The "guide to pronunciation" (inside front cover, teacher's editions) uses symbols from "Webster's Elementary Dictionary, A Dictionary for Boys and Girls, copyright 1969 by G. & C. Merriam Company." These symbols overdifferentiate sounds; e.g., the sounds of

the underlined letters in the following words are each symbolized differently: alone, camel, pencil, carrot, and circus, although the same sound is found in each ([ə], schwa). This overdifferentiation of sounds caused problems for the sound-to-spelling analysis of Hanna, Hanna, Hodges and Rudorf (1966), as indicated in that report and in Cronnell (1970a, f).

Some differentiation is appropriate for certain dialects, although not for all. For example, in some dialects four (vowel symbolized by ō in the series) and for (symbolized by ô) are pronounced differently, but this is not true for probably a majority of Americans. However, the Economy series makes no comment on the possibility of dialect variation, even for such common variables as [hw]--[w] (e.g., whale--wail), [ɔ]--[a] (e.g., cot--caught), where the first member of each pair is taught as if found in all dialects.[2] Another dialect problem is the variation between [u] and [yu] in many words (e.g., tune [tun] or [tyun]).[3] In spite of the fact that the sounds vary considerably among dialects and spellings of these sounds are generally only governed by semi-rules, the series insists on specific dialect--governed pronunciations; e.g., "Be sure to say [yu] (not [u]) in new" (2: T48). This must be confusing for all the teachers and children who say [nu] (see Kenyon & Knott, 1953).

Review

There is considerable review in the Economy series, both within and between books. Review of content of previous books is not indicated as such; instead it is presented as if new, often in conjunction with actual new material. In the "purpose" section, intra-book review is stated as "Review X," while inter-book review is stated as "Teach X." Teachers at a specific grade level are given no idea of what children should have mastered (or at least been taught) in previous years.

In addition to regular review lessons, in Books 2 and 3 there is a "special review section." This is a programmed-instruction section for individual use (although it appears that all children are expected to use it). In Books 2 and 3, it is the only place where explicit statements about spelling are made in the pupil's editions.

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[2] In one notable case dialect is noted, although "backwards" for most Americans. The words fast and last, for example, are given with the pronunciation [a], although the teacher is told to use [æ] if "usual in the community" (2: T74). However, [æ] is the most common pronunciation for these words, except in eastern New England, where [a] is found (Kenyon & Knott, 1953).

[3] The authors do not seem to realize that the sound [u] (dictionary symbol o͞o) is included in the sound [yu] (dictionary symbol ū); thus tney ask that [u] words only be picked out of a list also containing [yu] words "to sharpen the ability to hear subtle differences" (2: T54).

Number of words

Each year (after Book 1) there is some repetition of words used in previous years, exclusive of those designated as "review words." The frequency counts include these repeated words, as well as affixed forms.

Book 1:	142	
Book 2:	274	"spelling vocabulary"
	196	"words for skill development"[4]
	490	
Book 3:	365	"spelling vocabulary"
	59	"review words"[5]
	211	"words for skill development"[4]
	87	"supplementary word list"[6]
	722	
Book 4:	454	"spelling vocabulary"
	60	"review words"[5]
	458	"words for skill development"[4]
	105	"supplementary word list"[6]
	1077	

Content

It is difficult to precisely determine the content of the Economy series, for several reasons. First, except in Book 1, there is no table of contents. Since review and new materials are not clearly separated, it is not easy to determine what is being presented for the first time. The only way to determine content definitely is to read through the teacher's notes to see what is taught, and the volume and tedious detail of these notes makes reading them a most difficult task. In addition, spelling content is passed over very quickly

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[4]Words not on basic spelling list for each lesson.

[5]Words from preceding books, chosen on the basis of "various studies of words most frequently misspelled" (3: T95).

[6]From a separate pamphlet. The words "are designed to provide additional practice in applying the spelling principles taught in the *Spelling Growth* series. They also provide a program of vocabulary enrichment. They may be used with students who quickly learn the basic words... and need further challenge" (Supplementary word list, p. 2).

(e.g., when teaching igh, all that is said in three pages of teacher's notes and two pages of pupil's text is "Pronounce sigh and explain that igh sometimes spells the sound of ī at the end of a word," 2: T23,24), while unimportant matters are treated in detail (e.g., "Tell the pupils to place a check mark (✓) beside 1 on the colored strip to show that they have completed all work in the first group of exercises," 2: T24).

Nonetheless, in the following sections is an attempt to list the spelling content of the Economy series (not in order of presentation). There is a great deal of material covered in Books 1-4, providing a thorough foundation in English spelling provided that it can be taught and learned. The spelling generalizations are accurate and well sequenced. There are some transfer exercises, but no transfer tests.

Content of Book 1

Consonants and vowels are mixed throughout Book 1, but are presented separately here for convenience.

[b] → b	[hj] → h	[n] → n	[v] → v
[d] → d	[ǰ] → j	[p] → p	[w] → w
[f] → f	[l] → l	[ɹ] → r	[ks] → x
[g] → g	[m] → m	[t] → t	[y] → y

[s] → s (#__, __#, -s)
[z] → z [z] → s (__#, V__e#, -s)

[k] → k /__{ĭ}
[k] → k (C__#, V__e#)
[k] → c /__{a, o, u}

[kw] → qu

[æ] → a	[ɛ] → e	[ɪ] → i	[a] → o	[ə] → u
[e] → ai	[i] → ee	[i] → ea	[o] → oa	

[e] → a...e /__[C#]
[o] → o...e /__[C#]
[ay] → i...e /__[C#]
[(y)u] → u...e /__[C#]

Suffix: -s

Content of Book 2

[v] → ve /__#

[k] → ck /[v̆]__#
[k] → ck /s__ (in one word only)

[f] → ff / [V̆]__#
[l] → ll / [V̆]__#
[s] → ss / [V̆]__#

[š] → sh [č] → ch
[hw] → wh
[ŋ] → ng [ŋ] → n /__k
{[θ], [ð]} → th

[s] → se [s] → ce
[z] → ze

[n] → kn

[e] → ay /__#

[i] → e /__#

[ay] → ie (environment not stated /__#)
[ay] → y /__# [ay] → igh /__#

[o] → o /__# [o] → ow /__#
[o] → ou (e.g., four; this is rare)
[old] → old

[(y)u] → ew [(y)u] → ue
[u] → oo

[ɛ] → ea

[a] → a /w__

[ə] → o...e (e.g., love)

[u] → oo [u] → oul (e.g., could) [u] → u

[aw] → ow /__ ({l, n})# [aw] → ou (elsewhere)

[oy] → oy /__# [oy] → oi (elsewhere)

[ɔ] → o [ɔ] → aw /__# [ɔl] → all

[or] → or
[ar] → ar
[ɪr] → ear [ɪr] → eer [ɪr] → ere
[ɛr] → air [ɛr] → ear [ɛr] → are [ɛr] → ere

[ər] → er [ər] → ur [ər] → ir
[ər] → or /w__

[əl] → le [ən] → en
[i] → y /__#
[ə] → a /#__

[C] → CC /[V̆]__[V]

Syllabication

Suffixes: -ing
Suffixation: ∉ + es (i.e., drop the e and add es; 2: T78), ∉ + ing

Compounds

Content of Book 3

Little new spelling rule content is introduced in Book 3. Much emphasis is placed on stress and on syllable division. Words are spelled by syllables.

[ǰ] → ge

[č] → ch [č] → tch /[V̆]__

[čər], [čur] → ture

[r] → wr

[ayld] → ild [aynd] → ind

[o] → o (e.g., most)

[i] → ie

[u] → ou (e.g., you)

[ɔ] → au (e.g., taught) [ɔ] → ou (e.g., thought)

[or] → ar /w__

[e] → eigh [e] → ea (e.g., great)

[ə] → ou (e.g., young)

[ɔl] → al-
[bi] → be-

Suffix: -ed
Suffixation: ∉ + ed; y → i + es/ed

Contractions
Abbreviations

Content of Book 4

In Book 4, sound-to-spelling correspondences are stated explicitly in the pupil's text. Thus much earlier work is reviewed and stated.

[e] → a /__... [i] → e /__... [ay] → i /__...
[o] → o /__... [(y)u] → u /__...

[u] → o /__v (e.g., move)

[i] → ei

[ə] → a, e, i, o, u

[šən] → tion
[tɪn], [tn̩] → tain
[ɪǰ] → age
[čur] → ture

[ər] → ar, or, ur (unstressed)

[ǰ] → g [ǰ] → dge /[v̆]__

[f] → gh [f] → ph

[z] → s

[s] → c

Affixes

Suffix: -es

Possessives
Capitalization
Hyphenated compounds

DISTRIBUTION

1 - Baker

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1 - Okada

1 - Sullivan

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Group VII- Instructions to Subject (Set 1)

Screening Instructions

"I am going to show you words on cards. Say the words you know. Here is the first word. Do you know how to say it?" (Word list: WAS,CAN, SHE,TO,HIM,SAW,CAT,SEE,TOLD,JIM. If subject knows more than one word, give him or her a small trinket and dismiss. Also record name of subject and the words correctly identified by subject.)

Task 1 Instructions

"We are going to play a game. In this game we are going to learn some words. I will show you a card with a word on it and you tell me what the word is. If you don't know the word, I will tell you. The game is that you should try to say the word before I tell you the word's name. Do you understand how to play? (Answer any questions and paraphrase instructions if child seems confused).

Task 2 Instructions

"Now we are going to play the game with some other words. Again we are going to learn some words."

Task 3 Instructions

(See "Experimenter Directions" sheet)

Task 4 Instructions

(See "Experimenter Directions" sheet)

GroupVII- Instructions to Subject (Set 2)

Screening Instructions

"I am going to show you words on cards. Say the words you know. Here is the first word. Do you know how to say it?" (Word list: IT,FOR, HAD,ME,LET,TIM,FOX,HID,MAD,PET. If subject knows more than one word, give him or her a small trinket and dismiss. Also record name of subject and the words correctly identified by subject.)

Task 1 Instructions

"We are going to play a game. In this game we are going to learn some words. I will show you a card with a word on it and you tell me what the word is. If you don't know the word, I will tell you. The game is that you should try to say the word before I tell you the word's name. Do you understand how to play? (Answer any questions and paraphrase instructions if child seems confused).

Task 2 Instructions

"Now we are going to play the game with some other words. Again we are going to learn some words."

Task 3 Instructions

(See "Experimenter Directions" sheet)

Task 4 Instructions

(See "Experimenter Directions" sheet)